

commercial signs

The character of your storefront signage and that of your neighboring businesses contributes tremendously to how your business and your business district are perceived. Beyond windows that allow customers to see what you are offering, signage is by far the most important element of your storefront. Signage makes a strong and dynamic first impression. Signage can be a creative demonstration of your business' personality and attitude.

Businesses that have a lot of signs or signs that are big do not necessarily attract new customers. The more signs that a building has, the more cluttered and confusing the building façade appears.

On average, motorists can perceive only up to four (4) words or symbols on a storefront. The best signs rely on strong graphic character and few words. The best graphic character is achieved when there is a definite contrast between background and text

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colors. The best location for signs is typically centered over the storefront or the door into the business.

ENCOURAGED

- Replacing, repairing or installing signs that are appropriately scaled for your buildings and storefront.
- Maintaining and restoring historic signs.
- Exploring very creative graphics and materials that maintain high standards in legibility and character.
- Building flexibility into signage components to allow for changes or upgrades.
- Installing signs on the frieze or sign band, windows, doors, awnings or other architecturally appropriate location.
- Establishing a sign band on buildings that may not have a clearly demarcated area for signs.
- Using durable wood, painted plastics, metals, or pre-fabricated pin mounted letters.
- Installing painted metal or wood signs.
- Installing fin or blade signs, projected from the building wall, to identify a business to those passing by walking or traveling parallel to the storefront.

- Exploring bold and vibrant colors, still according to good graphic design practice, as a method of distinguishing a sign while relating the sign to the storefront design and business type or product.
- Painting window signs that act as a secondary signage location or that provide an additional level of information about the business, such as store hours or types of services.
- Recommending three-dimensional, fixed signs that include an icon of the business type or are the business name and/or logo.
- Illuminating signs from behind. (Backlit box signs are strongly discouraged.)
- Using neon signs to indicate a business name or trade, but not to advertise products or sales.
- Complying with signage regulations in the District's Sign Code.

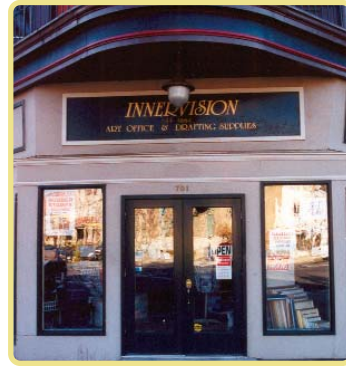
STRONGLY DISCOURAGED

- Applying too many signs to your storefront or building.
- Covering windows, cornices or decorative details with signs or any other element.
- Blocking visibility into your storefront with signs, shelves or other obstruction.
- Advertising alcoholic, tobacco or other merchandise in general.
- Installing internally-lit plastic or plastic faced signs.
- Maintaining obsolete advertisements or other temporary signs.
- Painting signs directly onto the building surface.
- Installing signage above the rooftop.

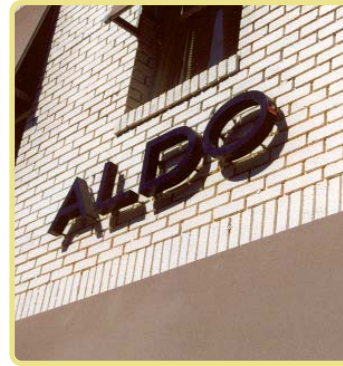
commercial sign types



CREATIVE METAL
RED GINGER (GEORGETOWN)



PAINTED ON WOOD / METAL
INNER VISION (CAPITOL HILL)



PIN-MOUNTED LETTERS
ALDO (GEORGETOWN)



SIGN PAINTED ON WINDOW
BRICE'S BARBER (CAPITOL HILL)



ICON SIGN
DC CD (ADAMS MORGAN)



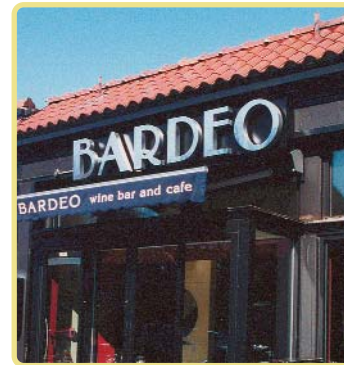
CARVED, PAINTED SIGN
FINO (GEORGETOWN)



SIGN PAINTED ON SIGN BAND
TRYST (ADAMS MORGAN)



PAINTED PROJECTING SIGN
BLUE MERCURY (GEORGETOWN)



RAISED DIMENSIONAL LETTERS
BARDEO (CLEVELAND PARK)



CUT, PAINTED SIGN
BANANA CAFÉ (CAPITOL HILL)